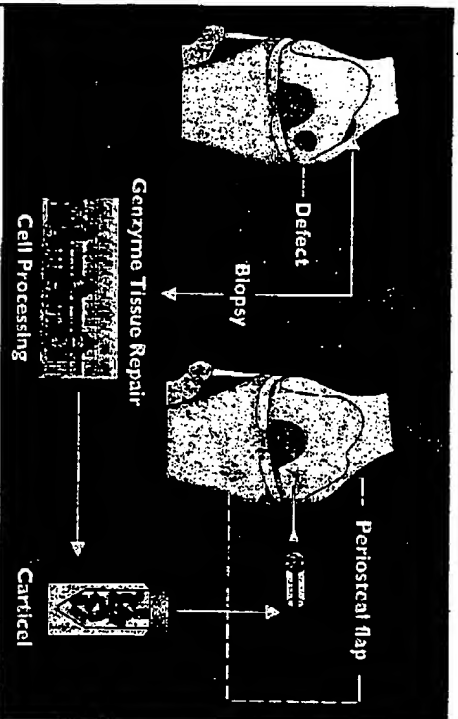


FDA OKs Genzyme's Carticel Product for Damage to Knees



Carticel, which was approved for the repair of clinically significant, symptomatic cartilaginous defects of the femoral condyle (medial, lateral or trochlear) caused by acute or repetitive trauma, employs a proprietary process to grow autologous cartilage cells for implantation.

By Naomi Pfeiffer

The FDA has approved a knee-cartilage replacement product made by Genzyme Tissue Repair (Cambridge, MA), a tracking-stock division of Genzyme Corp., for people with traumadamaged knees.

Carticel™ (autologous cultured chondrocytes) is the first product to be licensed under the FDA's pro-

SEE GENZYME, P. 6

Strategies for Target Validation Streamline Evaluation of Leads

By Vidd Glaser

Acacia Biosciences (Richmond, CA) last month announced its first agreement with a major pharmaceutical company, signing a deal with Eli Lilly (Indianapolis, IN) to use Acacia's Genome Reporter Matrix (GRM) to select and optimize some of Lilly's lead compounds. Acacia's yeast-based system for profiling drug activity is useful for evaluating the therapeutic potential of lead compounds, and it also has a role in the identification and validation of new drug targets.

"We're using the ecosystem of a cell to allow us to deduce the mechanism of action and target for any chemical," explains Bruce Cohen, president and CEO. "We screen for every target in a cell simultaneously...using transcription as a readout

for how a cell is adapting to any perturbation," he says.

The GRM technology consists of two main databases: one is the genetic response profile, showing the effects of mutations in each individual yeast gene and compensatory gene regulatory mechanisms; the other is the chemical response profile, which documents changes in gene expression in response to chemical compounds. Computational analysis and pattern matching between the genetic and chemical profiles yields information on the specificity, potency and side-effects risk of a drug lead.

Targeting Targets

No longer is mapping and sequencing a gene—or the human genome—an end unto itself, but

SEE TARGET, P. 16

Sticky Ends

Avigen received two grants from the NIH & University of California for research on gene therapy for treatment of cancer & HIV infections...MRL Pharmaceutical Services, of Reston, VA, launched the TSN Bug Finder, which is able to locate & retrieve client-specified microorganisms in real-time...Genista Bior, Inc. will move its corporate staff from San Diego to Irvine, CA, by end of year...

FDA accepted NDA from Scepter for levalbuterol HCl inhalation solution...An \$11.7M mezzanine financing has been closed by Activated Cell Therapy, which changed its name to Dendreon Corporation...Astra AB will build major research facility in Waltham, MA, and is also relocating Astra Arcus research facility from Rochester to Boston area...Prolifix Ltd. team used a small peptide to inhibit the E2F protein complex and induced

apoptosis in mammalian tumor cells...Vertex Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and Alpha Therapeutic Corp. ended an agreement to develop VX-366 for treatment of inherited hemoglobin disorders...Navil-Cyte received Phase I SBIR grant for up to \$100,000 from NIH for development of prototype of its Naviflow technology for high-throughput screening...Covance Inc. will invest \$21 million in expansion and renovation of its facility in Indianapolis, IN.

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